

**REPORT**

OF

**THE COMMITTEE**

TO WHOM WAS REFERRED THE SUBJECT

OF THE

**RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION**

OF

***THE COLORED POPULATION,***

***OF THE SYNOD***

**Of South-Carolina and Georgia,**

*At its late Session in Columbia, (South-Carolina,;*

**DECEMBER 5th—9th, 1833.**

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## REPORT.

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BELIEVERS in Divine Revelation, require no arguments to prove to them, that the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is designed for the whole human family; nor that it is the duty of those into whose possession, in the sovereign mercy of God, it has come, to make it known to others who may be destitute of it.

“The field is the world”—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature”—are the words of our Lord. In the great act of Atonement, He preferred not one nation or people above another. Says He, “My flesh—I give for the life of the world.” As his Disciples, we are to live for the salvation of the world, so far as we have ability and opportunity, without preferring in our regards one nation or people above another. The general rule, therefore, of benevolent effort is, that we impart the Gospel, with its accompanying blessings, in the first place, to such of our fellow creatures as are most dependent upon us for it;—to such as are most needy and accessible.

In casting our eyes over the field of our labours, we see that we have not acted according to this rule. We feel condemned by it. There is a numerous and important class of persons;—we may say—a *distinct people*, within our bounds, in perishing need of the Gospel, accessible and wholly dependent upon us, to whom we have not imparted it, at least in such measure

as their necessities and our duty demand. Our very knowledge of their moral degradation is limited, because we have not carefully inquired into it; and, consequently, our Christian sympathies are not yet awakened in their behalf. To extend our view beyond our bounds, who would credit it, that in these years of revival and benevolent effort, in this Christian Republic, there are over two millions of human beings in the condition of Heathen, and, in some respects, in a worse condition; and, if we include the *whole* population, almost entirely neglected! These are astounding truths—and truths to be confessed with fear and contrition.

But what is to be done? Shall we continue as we are, and as we have been? The conscience of every sound mind says, no. Let light be shed upon the moral and religious condition of our colored population; let the conviction of our immediate duty to extend to them the privileges of the Gospel, pervade the Church; and a system of operations be matured and put into effect for that purpose.

From long continued and close observation, we believe that their moral and religious condition is such as, that they may justly be considered the Heathen of this Christian country, and will bear comparison with Heathen in any country in the world.

Our design, in this Report, shall be, to set forth the duty of that portion of the Church of Christ which we represent, to evangelize these Heathen. And what is *our* duty, is the duty of *the whole Church of Christ* in the slave-holding States, in all her denominations. We shall do well, therefore, to extend our view, and embrace the colored population and the Church of Christ throughout the slave-holding States.

Before we attempt to set forth the duty, it will be proper to shew, *that the negroes are destitute of the privileges of the Gospel, and ever will be, under the present state of things.*

We do not deny that many enjoy the means of Grace; and there are a large number of professing Christians

amongst them ; and that in a few Churches, and on a few plantations, some particular attention is paid to their religious instruction. We rejoice in all this. But it is, at best, a day of small things ; and although our assertion is broad, we believe that, in general, it will be found to be correct.

A people may be said to enjoy the privileges of the Gospel, when they have free access to the Scriptures—a regular Gospel Ministry—houses for public worship, and the means of Grace in their own dwellings.

In relation to the first of these,—*Free access to the Scriptures*,—it is universally the fact throughout the slave-holding States, that either custom or law prohibits to them the acquisition of letters, and, consequently, they can have no access to the Scriptures. The proportion that read is infinitely small ; and the Bible, so far as they can read it for themselves, is, to all intents, a sealed book ; so that they are dependent for their knowledge of Christianity, upon *oral instruction*,—as much so as the unlettered Heathen, when first visited by our Missionaries.

If our laws, in their operation, seal up the Scriptures to the negroes, we should not allow them to suffer in the least degree, so far as any effort on our part may be necessary, for the want of a knowledge of their contents.

Have they then that amount of oral instruction, which, in their circumstances, is necessary to their enjoyment of the Gospel ? In other words, *have they a regular and efficient Ministry ? They have not.* In the vast field extending from an entire State beyond the Potomac to the Sabine River ; and from the Atlantic to the Ohio, there are, to the best of our knowledge, not *twelve* men exclusively devoted to the religious instruction of the negroes ! What effect will the labours of these few individuals, produce on a mass of one or two millions of souls, and more ? The number divided between them would give to each a charge of near 170,000 !

As to Ministers of their *own color*, they are destitute infinitely both in point of numbers and qualifications : to say nothing of the fact, that such a Ministry is looked upon with distrust, and is discountenanced. In the present state of feeling in the South, such a Ministry could neither be obtained nor tolerated.

But do not the negroes have access to the Gospel, through the stated Ministry of the whites ? We answer, no. The white population itself is but partially supplied with Ministers ; such being the fact, what becomes of the colored ? And the question may be asked with still greater emphasis, when we know that it has not been customary for our Ministers, when they accept calls for settlement, to consider servants as a regular part of their charge. They certainly are as much so as are children ; and Ministers are in duty bound to watch, as well for the souls of the one, as the other. But they are called to preach to masters, and to masters do they preach.

If we take the supply of Ministers to the whites now in the field, the amount of their labours in behalf of the negroes is small.

How many sermons and lectures are prepared and preached to them on the Sabbath, and during the week ? How many Bible classes, Sabbath schools, and Inquiry meetings, are instituted for their special benefit ? To a limited extent, in some parts of the vast field, the Ministers devote the afternoon or evening of the Sabbath day, to the religious instruction of the negroes, and they succeed in establishing a Sabbath school or two. But we venture the assertion, that if we take the whole number of Ministers in the slave-holding States, but a very small portion pay any attention to them. But justice obliges us to say, that in ordinary cases, much cannot be expected from Ministers to the whites ; for when they faithfully discharge their duties to their own congregations, they find it impossible to do much for the negroes ; especially where their congregations are spread over a large extent of territory.

and the number of colored persons in proportion to white, is two, three, or fourfold greater. They confine themselves to one field, and it proves sufficiently large to engage all their powers.

Let the negroes now come—and come of them who may, for no effort is made to draw them out—let the negroes now come to hear the preaching of Ministers to white congregations, and such is the elevation of their language and thought—such the amount of knowledge they take for granted in their audiences, that they might as well preach in Hebrew or Greek. The negroes do not understand them. And hence, their stupid looks, their indifferent staring, their profound sleeps, and their thin attendance. What is there to light up the countenance with intelligence—to rivet the attention—to banish drowsiness, so common to labouring men, when sitting still—what is there to attract them to the House of God? Nothing but sound and show. Solid instruction, pungent appeals to conscience, will bring men to the Church of God, and retain them in attendance there; and nothing else will. But Divine truth is not thus adapted to the negroes, by Ministers in their sermons to the whites; and if the negroes are to be put off with such a dispensation of the Gospel as this, we should literally consign them to ignorance and superstition and vice forever. We need no better evidence to confirm us in this opinion, than the condition of those negroes who enjoy such a dispensation of the Gospel, and such only. The whole—professors and non-professors, are low in the scale of intelligence and morality; and we are astonished thus to find Christianity in absolute conjunction with Heathenism, and yet conferring few or no benefits! The two classes are *distinct* in their education, station, association, duties, trials, and should have a *distinct Ministry*. The Gospel, as things now are, can never be preached to the two classes, successfully, in conjunction. We mean not, that servants should be separated into distinct and independent Churches; this, in our view, is not desirable; but that, while they are admitted members of white Churches,

and are taken under their care and discipline, they should be instructed and preached to for the most part *separately*.

The negroes have no regular and efficient Ministry; as a matter of course, *no Churches*; *neither is there sufficient room in white Churches for their accommodation*.

We know of but *five Churches* in the slave-holding States, built expressly for their use. These are all in the State of Georgia—all under colored Pastors, in connection with Baptist Associations, excepting one, which has been erected within the past year, by a Presbyterian Clergyman, a member of this Synod, at his own expense—an expense of three or four hundred dollars; and he supplies the pulpit himself gratuitously—an example which we should follow to the extent of our ability.

The galleries or back seats on the lower floor, of white Churches, are generally appropriated to the negroes, when it can be done with convenience to the whites. Where it cannot be done conveniently, the negroes who attend, must catch the Gospel as it escapes by the doors and windows.

We can furnish no accurate estimate of the proportion of negroes that attend Divine worship on the Sabbath, taking the slave-holding States together. From an extensive observation, however, we venture to say, that not a twentieth part attend. Thousands and thousands hear not the sound of the Gospel, nor enter a Church from one year to another. So much for the public administration of the Gospel to the negroes.

We may now inquire if they enjoy its privileges *in private, in their own houses, and on their own plantations*?

Again we return a negative answer. They have no Bibles to read at their own fire-sides—they have no family altars—and when in affliction, sickness or death, they have no Minister to address to them the consolations of the Gospel, nor to bury them with solemn and appropriate services. Sometimes a kind master will



perform these offices ; but, for the most part, they depend upon their own color, who perform them as well as they know how, if they happen to be at hand. If the master is pious, the house-servants alone attend family worship, and frequently few or none of these.

Here and there a master feels interested for the salvation of his servants, and is attempting something towards it in assembling them at evening, for reading the Scriptures and prayer ; in admitting and inviting qualified persons to preach to them. in establishing a daily or weekly school for the children, and in conducting the labour and discipline of the plantation on Gospel principles. We rejoice that there are such, and that the number is increasing. In general, we may however remark, that it does not enter into the arrangements of plantations, to make provision for their religious instruction ; and so far as masters are engaged in this work, an almost unbroken silence reigns over the vast field.

From what we have now said, we feel warranted in the conclusion, that the negroes are destitute of the privileges of the Gospel, and must continue to be so, if nothing more is done for them.

Such being the fact, our *duty* is obvious. It is, *to extend the privileges of the Gospel to the negroes, immediately, in a judicious and efficient manner.* And we conceive that God imposes this duty upon us, both in *His Providence*, and in *His Word*.

He imposes it in *His Providence*.

It matters not to us of the present generation, so far as the duty under consideration is concerned, by whose consent and agency the negroes were introduced into the United States, nor whether they were introduced in a just or unjust manner. *They are here* ; and here too as *immortal and accountable beings*. In the Providence of God, we are not accountable for the manner in which they came here. They came here before we were born. Nor are we accountable for our birth in the slave States—for our being born masters. We

are not responsible for the creation of this relation; but we certainly are for the continuance of it, and the manner in which we discharge its duties.

We are, therefore, the natural guardians of our servants, and guardians too of almost unlimited authority. According to law, they are *property*; their persons and services are at our disposal: and for every privilege civil, social and religious, they are absolutely dependent; nor can any person step in between us and them, or touch them in any particular whatever, without our permission. This guardianship, from its unlimited authority, is consequently one of no ordinary responsibility; and if we would secure the approbation of Almighty God, it should be exercised according to the principles of eternal truth and justice, by which we shall be prompted to seek their best temporal and eternal interests, and also those of their posterity.

In as much, then, as the souls of this people are of more value than their bodies, their eternal than their temporal interests, who will deny that our *first duty is to extend to them the privileges of the Gospel of Salvation*? Whatever be the condition of their bodies, their souls should not be permitted to suffer. While men are contending and legislating on the subject of their civil condition and prospects, what becomes of their immortal souls? They perish by multitudes; and if we possess the spirit of our Master, we cannot look on with indifference. Our settled opinion is, that we should direct our efforts to the improvement of their moral and religious condition in the first place. Let the truth of God be brought to bear upon them and us, and light will be cast on their condition in every way.

The laws secure to the negroes the rest of the Sabbath; they permit them to assemble for religious worship on that day, and all other days, under particular provisions; and on our own plantations, we can instruct them at our pleasure. We may do what we will with our own, without interfering with any man's liberty or conscience.

The negroes in Providence, are shut up in their hopes to us. They are as dependent upon us as our children, and even more so. If we deny them, they are destitute—they are friendless, and they perish; but their souls will be required at our hands!

God imposes this duty upon us in *His Word* also.

Generally, on the principles already advanced, that the Gospel is the Gift of God to man; all who possess it, are bound to bestow it upon those who do not.

For the sake of impression, we may introduce briefly a few passages—"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Men are recognized in this command, not as of a particular nation or color, but as the moral and intelligent creatures of God. "God hath made of one blood all the nations of men." It is necessary that the word of God be spoken to the Africans; and seeing they have not put it from them, nor judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life, we cannot, we dare not, neglect them and turn to others.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The negroes are our neighbours, for they are men, members of the same great family; and most emphatically such, since they form a part of our households, dwell upon our grounds, and spend their days in our service. If they are not our neighbours, whom we are bound to love as ourselves, we have no neighbours at all.

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye ever so to them."

This rule of action, does not recklessly break down *just* distinctions in society. It is, therefore, to be obeyed intelligently, with due regard to persons and circumstances. Whatever change an intelligent and perfect obedience to this rule, would make in the condition of servants, every man is at liberty to judge for himself. But one thing would certainly result from such obedience—servants would receive the Gospel at our hands. Were we in the condition of the negro, and he in our own; able to read and appreciate the

Gospel, and to impart it to us, would we not think it his duty to do it? Yes, that Gospel which is consolation to the poor and the afflicted, and life eternal to them who are dead in trespasses and sins; would we not deem him deficient both in humanity and religion, if he either neglected or would not do it?—"Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" With more tremendous emphasis let it be asked,—“Whoso hath the *word of eternal life*, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” Let this question be answered to that God, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work!

But the Word of God contains *express commands to us as masters*.

To pass by the Old Testament, we have in the New, “And ye *masters*, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your master also is in Heaven: neither is there respect of persons with him.” And again, “*Masters*, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven.”

What kind of slavery was that existing in the days of Christ and his Apostles, which called for these commands to masters, and also others to servants? *Precisely that kind with which we have to do*. We are, therefore, the *identical* persons addressed. As identical, as when we are *fathers*; and it is said, “Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.”

Here the Word of God takes fast hold of us, and we cannot extricate ourselves. The Lord puts his finger upon us as *masters*. He holds up our servants before our faces. He tells us, that in the performance of duty, He does not respect us, more than He respects them. He bids us to be particular and conscientious in our treatment of them, for we have a Master in Heaven, to whom we shall give account. He bids us

render to them—even to them whom we are so prone to consider fit for no other purpose, designed for no other end, than to be hewers of wood and drawers of water—that *which is just and equal*—just and equal for body and soul, for time and eternity.

How much masters come short in rendering to servants, what is just and equal for this present world, we cannot say. They have a Master in Heaven. But do they render to them that which is just and equal for the world to come? Is it just and equal to suffer them to live in ignorance of the way of salvation, to die and be eternally lost? Says Job, “If I did despise the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? And when He visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not He that made me in the womb, make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?” Our servants may justly have a controversy with us on the subject of their higher and better interests; and if we despise their cause, in the day when God riseth up and visiteth, we shall be speechless.

The Providence and the Word of God could not more plainly point out to us, the duty of imparting the Gospel of salvation to our colored population; and if that duty remains undischarged, we shall incur God’s severe displeasure.

This duty we must view in the light of a *privilege*.

It is a privilege to repay obligation: and our obligations to our servants, are greater than many are disposed to allow. It is through them that we obtain the houses we live in, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, and the education we receive. They wear out their lives to furnish us with the necessities and luxuries of life. Shall we not, then, while we contribute far more than we do to their temporal comforts, esteem it a privilege, to present to them the richest gift of God to man, the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Will not this be the kindest return that we can make them? And what if infinite mercy makes us the honored instruments of their salvation, shall we not then esteem our

duty an inestimable privilege! We shall so esteem it in the day that the Lord shall come to "make up his jewels."

But we have not yet done. The *benefits* which will flow from the religious instruction of the negroes, clearly show that it will be to our *interest*.

1. *There will be a better understanding of the relation of master and servant, and of their reciprocal duties.*

There are but few masters who have given themselves the trouble of solemn, prayerful inquiry into the number and nature of those duties, which they owe to their servants, and are in reason and conscience bound to perform; and but few servants who have been instructed as to the number and nature of their duties to masters. Great ignorance and indifference exist both on the one hand and on the other. Conscience sleeps. And although the reciprocal duties of master and servant are so important, and are so particularly defined in the Scriptures, we do not recollect to have heard a sermon from the pulpit concerning them. The reason for this neglect on the part of the Ministry, we cannot assign, unless it be, that they have partaken of the spirit of silence and forgetfulness, prevalent in our country on the general subject. It is a glaring and culpable neglect of duty; and we take occasion here to urge upon ourselves, and upon every minister connected with this Synod, repentance and reformation.

The principle which regulates duty in slavery, on the part of the master, has been thus defined:—"Get all you can, and give back as little as you can;" and on the part of the servants the reverse:—"Give as little as you can, and get back all you can." When we remember what human nature is, and when we observe the conduct of masters and servants, we fear that there is too much truth as to the existence of this principle.

Wherever such a principle prevails, even in a slight degree, there remains little room for an inquiry into and discharge of duty on Gospel principles. We feel that something is needed to unfold the reciprocal duties of

master and servant, and to effect a change so that they may stand upon some common ground, and not act so entirely by contraries.

*That something, is, the introduction of Religion.* Religion will tell the master, that his servants are his fellow creatures; and he has a Master in Heaven to whom he shall account for his treatment of them. Religion will tell the servant, "to be obedient to masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart as unto Christ. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

The master will be led to inquiries of this sort:—In what kind of houses do I permit them to live; what clothes do I give them to wear? What food, to eat? What privileges to enjoy? In what temper and manner, and proportion to their crimes, are they punished? What am I doing for their souls' salvation? In fine, what does God require me to do to, and for them and their children, in view of their happiness here and hereafter? Light will insensibly break into his mind. Conscience will be quickened, and before he is aware, his servants will be greatly elevated in his regards, and he is compelled to do more for them. The government of the plantation will not be so purely selfish as formerly. His interest will not be the sole object of pursuit, and offences against that visited with sorer punishment, than offences against God himself. He will have an eye to the comfort, the interest of his people, and endeavour actually to identify their interest with his, and also to make them see and feel it to be so. It will be a delight to him, to see them enjoy the blessings of the Providence and Grace of God.

Such attempt at a discharge of duty, will produce favourable influences upon the feelings and conduct of servants. Their duties will be understood, and better and more cheerfully performed.

2. *The pecuniary interests of masters will be advanced as a necessary consequence;* and in many particulars, increased attention to their temporal comforts.

will contribute to the improvement of *health* ; and the expense of lost labour by sickness, and of physicians bills, will be saved. Their wants being more liberally supplied, and sharing more largely in the fruit of their labours, many temptations to which they are now exposed, will be removed ; they will become more *industrious* and *saving*, and *less addicted to crime*. Their work will be more *faithfully done* ; their *obedience* more universal, and more cheerfully rendered.

Religious instruction we view as the strongest auxiliary to governments of all kinds, even where it fails to transform characters ; and its genuine effects upon servants will be, “ with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not unto men.”

And who can tell what the pleasurable feelings of a humane master will be in view of a moral reformation of his servants ? He will thank God that he is, if not wholly, yet measurably relieved from perpetual watching, from fault-finding and threatening and heart-sickening severity ; and that he can govern to some good extent by the law of love.

3. *The religious instruction of the negroes, will contribute to safety.*

Many affect, or in reality despise all fears from our colored population ; and the universal habit is, never to think of the subject, or to dismiss it as soon as it may be suggested. We cannot believe this to be the part of sound wisdom. What has happened may happen again ; and such means should be set in operation, as may promise deliverance from danger. It is very true, that we are differently situated, in many respects, from any other slave-holding country, and that at the present time, so far as we can see, the hope of success on the part of the negroes, is forlorn. But no enemy should be despised, however weak, and no danger unprovided for, however apparently remote. Though success may not crown any attempt, yet incalculable sufferings may ensue both to the one party and the other. *What means*, therefore, will secure the country against danger such as we have intimated ?



Passing by the different means that have been suggested, we unhesitatingly affirm, that *no means will compete with that of religious instruction.*

The tendency of the preaching of the Gospel, even where its transforming influence on character is *not* realized, is to soften down and curb the passions of man, to make him more respectful of another's interests, and more solicitous of his favour: and to enhance infinitely in his estimation the value of human life. His conscience is enlightened, and his soul is awed. He knows, God reigns to execute Judgment, and it will require greater effort to excite him to unhallowed deeds.

But in those cases where character is transformed, we may repose confidence. The servant now recognizes a superintending Providence, who disposes of men and things according to his pleasure. He learns, that every man should abide in the same calling wherein he was called. That Christianity comes not with reckless efforts to wrench apart human society; but to put into operation those principles of moral conduct, which will secure its happiness, and *peaceably* remove every kind of evil and injustice. To God, therefore, he commits the ordering of his lot, and in his station renders to all their dues, obedience to whom obedience, and honor to whom honor. He dares not wrest from the hand of God his own case and protection. While he sees a preference in the various conditions of men, he remembers the words of the Apostle:—"Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it; but if thou mayest be free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise, also he that is called being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

Is it to the operation of these principles in the hearts of servants, that we look for safety; and we look with confidence *no where else*. We see nothing in the *natural* character of man upon which we can rest with satis-

faction; nor can we rest with satisfaction in any measures that may be proposed, to the exclusion of religious instruction. Include this means, yea make it a *primary* one.

We are aware that a large number, who have no knowledge of religion in their own experience, and who have not been careful to notice its genuine effects upon servants, will place little or no confidence at all in what we have now advanced. Men naturally walk by *sight*. They can place more reliance upon *visible preventives* of their own invention, than upon *principles*, wrought in the soul and maintained in supremacy by Divine Power, whose nature they do not understand, and whose influence, however good, is invisible, and for that very reason cannot be trusted. They know practically no superintending Providence. They glory in their wisdom and in their riches and in their strength. Whatever may be the decision of such persons, *Christians* have no choice left them. *Experience* of what Religion is, and what it can effect for man, obliges them to embrace it as the only safe ground of confidence. We shall never forget the remark of a venerable colored Preacher, made during a period of some excitement. With his eyes filled with tears, and his whole manner indicating the deepest emotion, said he, "Sir, it is the Gospel that we ignorant and wicked people need. If you will give us the Gospel, it will do more for the obedience of servants, and the peace of community, than all your guards and guns and bayonets." One such man is of more value to the community, than a thousand stand of arms and men to bear them.

Besides the general and special influences of the Gospel now adverted to, safety will be connected with its dispensation in two particulars, which we may not omit.

The first is, that the constant presence of white men in their religious assemblies, and free intercourse with them, will draw out their kindly feelings to masters, exert a restraining influence upon any spirit of insubor-

dination that may exist, and at the same time, give opportunity for its detection.

And the second,—that the negroes will be disabused of their superstition and ignorance, and thus be placed beyond the reach of designing men, wherever they may be. The most direct way to expose them to acts of insubordination, is to leave them in ignorance and superstition, to the care of their own Religion. Then may they be made the easy and willing instruments of avarice, of lust, of power or revenge. “*Keep them in ignorance*” is the dreadful sentiment, frequently uttered; and not more dreadful than dangerous. *Ignorance—religious ignorance*, so far from being any safety, as many suppose, is the *very marrow of our sin against this people, and the very rock of our danger*. Religion and religious teachers, they will have; and if they are not furnished with the true, they will embrace the false.

When we impart the Gospel to the negroes, we lay a foundation for safety in God himself. *We discharge duty to them, and thus secure His favour and protection.*

All who have long and carefully examined the subject of slavery, confess that it is a great and difficult one. We cannot now see the termination of it in our country, nor the nature of its continuance. Public opinion is every where divided on both these points. In view of the whole subject, we would emphatically say, *Let us fall into the hands of the Lord*—let us do what he so clearly defines to be *present* duty, and we shall cast ourselves and our servants into His hands; and confidently rely upon Him to open to us what may be *future* duty, and to guide us and our servants, quietly and intelligently in the way that we should go. The path of present duty is the path of safety. But if we neglect duty, what may not come upon us? What may we not expect? What shall we not deserve?

4. Another benefit is, *we shall promote our own morality and religion:*

The influence of the negroes upon the moral and religious interests of the whites, is destructive in the extreme. We cannot go into special detail. It is unnecessary. We make our appeal to universal experience. We are chained to a putrid carcase ; it sickens and destroys us. We have a millstone hanging about the neck of our society, to sink us deep in the sea of vice. Our children are corrupting from their infancy ; nor can we prevent it. Many an anxious parent, like the Missionary in foreign lands, wishes that his children could be brought up beyond the reach of the corrupting influence of depraved heathen. Nor is this influence confined to mere childhood. If that were all, it would be tremendous. But it follows us into youth, into manhood, and into old age.

And when we come directly in contact with their depravity in *the management* of them ; then come temptations and provocations and trials that unsearchable grace only can enable us to endure. In all our intercourse with them, we are undergoing a process of intellectual and moral deterioration ; and it requires almost superhuman effort to maintain a high standing either for intelligence or piety.

The effort to evangelize them, will tend directly to increase and to encourage the growth of Grace in our own souls. This is the testimony of those who have made the attempt. Consequently, the Church will take a higher stand for piety, and realize the promise, "He that waters shall be watered also himself." And as God crowns our labours with blessings, the negroes will become more modest, more elevated in intelligence and morality ;—our youth will be defended from contamination, and our riper years from overpowering trials. As the one class rises, so will the other ;—the two are so intimately associated, that they rise or fall together—to benefit servants, evangelize the masters—to benefit masters, evangelize the servants.

5. *Much unpleasant discipline will be saved to the Churches.*

The offences of colored communicants against Christian character and church order, are very numerous, and frequently heinous. The discipline is difficult, wearisome and unpleasant. Excommunications are of continual occurrence, and are usually, in a short time, followed by applications for re-admission; for with them, to die under sentence of excommunication, is eternal ruin itself. There never will be a better state of things until the negroes are better instructed in religion.

6. The last benefit we shall mention is, one that we convey to servants, instrumentally;—*It is the salvation of their souls.*

The great object for which we would communicate religious instruction is, that their souls may be saved. To this all other objects should be subordinate; and we believe that God will bless our instructions according to our desire. Strengthened by faith, let us be willing to sow in tears, for we shall reap in joy. Let us be willing to go forth weeping and bearing precious seed, for we shall come again with rejoicing, bearing sheaves with us. If the rest of Heaven is sweet to any human being, it is to the poor African. If the cheering hopes of a blessed immortality are necessary to any human being, to animate and sustain him in his pilgrimage below, they are necessary to the poor African. All souls are mine saith the Lord; and his Glory may be advanced as much in the salvation of the soul of an African servant, as in the salvation of the soul of any other man whatever.

According to the Providence and Word of God, it is our duty to impart the Gospel to our servants; and the duty is to us both privilege and interest; but to this present hour it has been *neglected*. And *why* neglected? Have we any *excuses* to offer, that God will accept? We tremble when we affirm, that the guilt of this neglect to perform such obvious and important duty, falls unrelieved upon the Southern Church; for we believe, that we can present not *one* excuse that will bear the test of candid examination.

Shall we say that *our servants already partake of the Gospel?* Have we not shown, that they do not to that extent that their necessities and our duty demand?

Shall we say, that *they are incapable of receiving it?*

Dare we utter a wilful, malicious libel against the *Great Parent of all?*

Dare we contradict his own most Holy Word?—and incur the guilt of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, whose renewing influences are distinctly seen in numerous instances?

Shall we say that *we have not the means?*

Have we children—can we not instruct them? Have we servants—and can we not instruct them?

What may we not do by our own personal efforts? We may read and explain the Bible; teach portions of it; converse with them on the subject of the soul's salvation, and implore the blessing of God upon them. In a thousand ways, if we feel as we ought, we may do something.

And what may we not do through members of our own families, or pious and willing neighbours, who may be qualified to teach? What may we not do through the employment of Missionaries, to devote their whole time to the negroes? But Missionaries must be supported in such labour? Very true. But the expense borne by a neighbourhood of planters, would fall lightly on each; while the peace of mind, and the benefits resulting from such a discharge of duty, would counterbalance that expense. We know, however, that this is a delicate point, and men are hard to be moved to any good purpose touching it. The Ministry to the whites is not adequately supported. There are very many great respecters and lovers of religion, who highly appreciate the privileges of the Gospel, and anxiously desire the salvation of perishing men; but who seem to think, that the instruments in this glorious work, require little or no pecuniary support; in a word, contrary to reason and Scripture, think that Ministers

should preach for nothing and find themselves. But can Missionaries in sufficient numbers be procured? We answer they can. And the way to procure them is briefly this. In the first place, Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into his vineyard. And in the second—Associate yourselves—take up the work in good earnest, and employ all who present themselves; and if you have more fields than can be supplied, call for more Missionaries, and they will be raised up and sent. The way to have our wants supplied, is to let them be known.

Shall we say, *that Christianity meets with little success amongst them?*

When we consider the influence of the circumstances of this people upon their religious character, our wonder should be, not that the Gospel meets with *little success*, but that it meets with *any success at all*, for their circumstances are in the last degree unfavourable to the cultivation of piety. We do not, however, make proper allowances in our expectations. We have lost much of our patience and benevolence. Having reduced them to ignorance, and by our neglect of duty confirmed them in vice, we now quarrel with their stupidity and obduracy. If they are not made intelligent and pious in a few days, we are ready to cry out, that labour is vain; the field must be abandoned as an unprofitable one. We act unreasonably and uncharitably. We expect more of them than of ourselves, or any other people. *They who would evangelize servants, must let patience have her perfect work.*

It certainly comes with a very ill grace from us to speak of the little success of the Gospel amongst the negroes. That little success is our condemnation; for what great efforts have we made, that we should expect great success? Where we bestow no labour, we must expect no reward.

We may affirm, without fear of contradiction, that the Gospel meets with as much success amongst the negroes, as amongst any other unlettered heathen in the world, proper allowances being made. We should

be encouraged, therefore, to put forth vigorous efforts in their behalf. God has designs of mercy towards them. When the *soul* is at stake, we are not to speak of expense and trouble in saving it. To overthrow the excuse at once, we add,—if the Gospel met with *no success at all*, it would be no reason why we should not undertake the religious instruction of the negroes. For if we certainly determine that it is our *duty*, (as we have already done) we should do it. The *success* of that instruction belongs not to us, but to *God*; nor are we to limit his sovereignty in granting or withholding a blessing to any *particular time*. We are to labour *in faith*, and labour *on*. This is the view which every Christian should and must take of the subject.

Shall we say that *there are peculiar and great difficulties hard to be overcome*?

Such for example, as the ignorance, indifference, and in some instances, the opposition of masters—the want of funds—of Missionaries—of systems of instruction—the stupidity and viciousness of servants, and confinement to *oral* instruction entirely? We ask, will these and other difficulties that might be mentioned, be removed by being let alone? Are there any means now in operation for their removal? Will they ever be fewer in number than they are at the present time?

There are difficulties in every enterprize of benevolence; and if we wait in our efforts to do good, until all difficulties are removed, we shall never commence. Times have suddenly and strangely altered in the world if Christians can do good without encountering much that will try the purity and firmness of their purposes. Shall we cower and retire before difficulties? By no means. We are to encounter them patiently, kindly, perseveringly; casting our care on *God*. He calls us to the duty. The work is His. In His strength we labour. Do difficulties present themselves? Remember God is great. Difficulties appear large in the distance; but the nearer and more resolute our advance, the smaller they become, until when in the strength of the Lord we encounter them, they vanish out of sight.



But, *of whose creation* are these difficulties? Certainly not of the poor negroes? In themselves considered, we meet with no difficulties but such as arise from the natural enmity of the heart to truth. The difficulties lie at our door, and it is unjust that they should be made innocent sufferers. We thrust ourselves and our arrangements between them and eternal life and then make excuse, that there are difficulties in the way!

We have no *excuses*. The reason of our neglect of duty, is our ignorance on the one hand, and our indisposition on the other. As the true light now begins to shine, we cannot retain either the one or the other, without convicting ourselves of heinous sin.

There are some *objections* to the religious instruction of the negroes, originating, as we believe, in misconceptions of the subject. We feel it our duty to give these objections a brief consideration.

The first is, *If we suffer our negroes to be religiously instructed, the tendency, yea the certain end of it, will be emancipation.*

In reply, we remark, that we separate entirely their *moral* and their *civil* condition; and contend, that the one may be attended to, without interfering with the other.

Our principle is that laid down by the Holy and Just One—"Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." And Christ and his Apostles are our example. Did they deem it proper to preach the Gospel to servants?—They did. Did they, in discharge of this duty, interfere with their civil condition? They did not. They expressed no opinion whatever on their civil condition, if we except that which appears in one of the Epistles to the Corinthian Church. There the Apostle Paul considers a state of freedom preferable to one of servitude, and advises slaves, if they can lawfully obtain their freedom, to do it, but not otherwise. May we not follow in the footsteps of the Saviour and his Apos-

des? Yea, and without proceeding as far as did the Apostle Paul? We maintain, that in judicious, religious instruction, there will be no necessary interference with their civil condition. The religious teacher must step out of his way for the purpose. This we know from our own experience.

But why will the end of religious instruction be emancipation? Do not the majority, perhaps of our citizens who make this objection, consider slavery sanctioned by the Bible? Do they sincerely believe it? If they do, why then do they hesitate to have the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, preached to their servants? But do they believe the contrary? Then our answer is but a word. Shall thousands, and even millions of immortal minds be sacrificed at the shrine of cupidity? Which ought to prevail for the good of mankind, for the glory of our country, for the prosperity of the cause of God,—principle or interest? Right or wrong? Let the enlightened conscience of the philanthropist, of the patriot, and of the Christian, return the answer.

The tendency feared in the objection, is a *moral* one only, which we cannot possibly avoid, do what we may. It is folly to contend against God. Christianity is ultimately to prevail on the earth, and in due course of time, will reach our servants. And should the particular end, spoken of in the objection, come by the preaching of the Gospel, happy are we in believing, that it could not come in a more gradual, in an easier, nor in a safer way. It will be the work of the Almighty, the effect of the Divine principles of His word, which, in their operation, while they impel the master to the end, will restrain the servant from all acts of precipitate violence to attain it. And thus may the Glory of the removal of the evil be laid at the foot of the Cross.

We express ourselves thus freely, because we are called upon to meet an objection, which, if it prevails, will be ruinous to the prosperity of our country, and the best interests of vast multitudes of souls.

Come what may, as Christians, we have no alternative. If we are to obey God our Saviour, we must preach the Gospel to servants ; and as we have already said, so say we again—*Let us and all our interest fall into the hands of God.*

2. If we suffer our negroes to be religiously instructed, *the way will be opened for men from abroad to enter in, and inculcate doctrines subversive of our interests and safety.*

The field of labour is one of no ordinary difficulty : and it is the dictate of prudence, to look into the character and qualifications of those who enter it. On this point we wish to be distinctly understood. They should be *Southern men*—men entitled to this appellation ; either those who have been born and reared in the South, or those who have identified themselves with the South, familiarly acquainted with the structure of society, and having all their interests here. Can objections be urged against *such* men? Is it probable that they will ruin themselves, their families, and their interests?

The very spirit which prompts the objection, refutes it. For, how is it possible, when such a wary vigilance is manifested, for individuals, *strangers* in the community, to come in, have access to the negroes, and sow the seeds of discontent and revolt? It is impossible. They cannot come unless we permit them.

The most effectual method to preclude the introduction of such persons, is for us to take the religious instruction of the negroes into our own hands, and to superintend it ourselves. We shall then know *who* their teachers are, and *what* they are taught,

3. The religious instruction of the negroes, *will lead to insubordination.*

They will assume an equality with the master, neglect their work, and resist discipline.

This might be the effect of injudicious instruction—of instruction that did not recognize their condition in society, and inculcate the duties appropriate to it. But

let us "rightly divide the word, and the evil apprehended at once vanishes. What saith the Scripture? Ministers are commanded to "exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things: not answering again: not purloining, but showing all good fidelity: that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." Again:—"Servants be obedient unto them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart as unto Christ; not with eye-service as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." The passage in Colossians, is similar. We bring forward two more. "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear: not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thank-worthy if a man, for conscience toward God endure grief suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

"Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed: And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort."

Such are the commands to servants, as comprehensive of their duties as any master could desire. We even see the Apostle Paul using his influence to secure obedience to these commands in a particular instance. The "unprofitable" Onesimus he restores to his master, though he had escaped from him to the distance of several hundred miles. He restores him a "brother beloved." His letter to Philemon for beauty and excellency is above all praise,

We now ask, will the authority of masters be weakened by instructions of this sort? No, never. That authority is strengthened by considerations drawn from *eternity*. If insubordination ensues, it will be the fault of the master, and not of the instruction. The master is the master still, and the servant is the servant still. Religious instruction, while it softens down the severity of discipline, by elevating the moral principles of master and servant, does not supercede the necessity of it. Otherwise, men would be made perfect in this life. Our view is, *that religious instruction should be accompanied with a proper and efficient discipline*. Should the master relax his discipline, whether he gives religious instruction or not, his servants will become disorderly and unprofitable. We desire the sentiments now expressed to be pondered and adopted by all who wish well to the cause of religion among servants.

What parent considers the religious instruction of his children, as having a tendency to make them more wicked and disorderly? Or, what judicious parent will relax his discipline, because he gives religious instruction? Will not the very fact of giving that instruction, prompt him to perfect and maintain discipline? We are to act towards our servants, on the same principles that we act towards our children.

Will they not, however, embrace the seasons of religious worship, for originating and executing plans of insubordination?

We answer, by no means, if the religious teacher is faithful in his supervision of his charge, and is assisted in his public meetings by the planters, for whose servants he labours. The presence of white men in their religious assemblies, precludes such a thing. Wherever such plans have been originated in religious meetings, it was because the white community was unfaithful to the negroes, and to themselves. They should have been present in those meetings. To leave the negroes to themselves in their religious affairs, is placing them in the way of temptation.

But why are men so tenacious of *religious* assemblies? Are not the negroes privileged by some to assemble for feasting and merriment, for particular kinds of labour, and at places of trade? We hear of no objections against such assemblies. If we are competent to the management of the latter, we certainly are of the former.

4. The religious instruction of the negroes *will do no good: it will only make them worse men and worse hypocrites.*

What is the Gospel? Is it not "the grace of God that bringeth salvation,—teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works?" This is the Gospel. These are the things which we are to teach and exhort. And is it under *such* teaching and exhortation, that men will increase in crime and hypocrisy? Why should the Gospel produce an effect on negroes, contrary to that which it is designed to produce, and which it actually produces on all other men, and on some whose condition is worse than theirs?

From what people did we, with all our piety and morality and intelligence spring? From a people, we were about to say, once as degraded as the negroes. And what has lifted us so far above our progenitors? The Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel. Is there, then, no redeeming power in the Gospel for the Africans? We believe that there is, because they are men, endowed with reason and conscience as are other men; because past history declares it; because we know it from our own personal observation, which is supported by that of others. We would point all who doubt of the salutary effects of attempts to christianize Africans, to the present condition of the Hot-

tentots and other tribes, under the care of the London Missionary Society at the Cape of Good Hope. Yea, the Hottentots!

And what is the moral degradation of any people to the power of the Holy Ghost. The immortal mind may be darkened and polluted by ignorance and sin; but the immortal mind is there, and that precious jewel may be cleansed of its defilements, filled with light and purity, and fitted for the highest and most honourable uses, both in this world and in that which is to come.

The objection is not supported by a solitary fact. Wherever negroes have *really* enjoyed, for any reasonable time, the privileges of the Gospel, in point of general morality and order, they are in advance of those who have not enjoyed them. Is it not conceded, that a truly pious servant gives less trouble, and is more profitable, than one who is not? Is there one planter in a thousand who does not desire such servants? Is it not true, that the most pious servants exert the happiest influence in promoting honesty and good order on plantations and in neighbourhoods?

That there are a large number of *nominal* Christians amongst them, we do not deny. But why is it so? Are they made hypocrites by faithful instruction? No. The abounding of spurious religion, results from a deficiency of faithful instruction, and a too hasty admission into the Church, after a profession of conversion. A reformation on our part, in regard to these two particulars, would produce a very happy effect upon the purity and permanency of their religious character.

The fact that many are hypocrites, proves to no inconsiderable extent, that there are advantages connected with a profession of religion; and where shall we look mainly for these advantages, if not in that higher estimation in which they are held by all persons?

One or two irregularities in their meetings, or one or two defections, are sufficient to prejudice the minds of many against the religious instruction of the negroes. Because they remain impenitent and pervert the Gos-

pel, therefore are they unworthy of it! Who, then, would be worthy, if God should deal with us according to this rule?

Suppose we admit the objection to be true in its fullest extent, and what then? Does it annul our duty? Far from it. Let them harden themselves and grow worse under the means of Grace; whether they will hear or forbear, we are to do our duty; we are to obey God; we are to throw the responsibility of their salvation upon their own shoulders, and to clear our garments of their blood. And who are we—in what age, and in what country of the world do we live, that we should question the excellency of the Gospel—the propriety of preaching it to the poor?

The objections, now briefly considered, we do not deem of sufficient weight to deter us from the conclusion to which we have already come, *that it is our duty to impart the Gospel to our colored population.*

We cannot close this Report, extended beyond our expectations by the interest of the subject, without asking ourselves, nay, the Church of Christ, in the slave-holding States, why is not this duty *felt*, and why has it not been *performed*?

Why is there such general apathy to the perishing condition of two millions of heathen? Why is it, that so much feeling may be awakened, touching their civil condition—and so little, touching their religious condition. The latter is infinitely to be esteemed above the former, and proportionably attended to.

Are not Ministers of the Gospel to be blamed?—Why have they not looked into the destitute condition of this people,—and, as they have had opportunity, laboured for their salvation, esteeming them as a part of their charge? Why have they not urged upon masters, their duties to their servants? Are Ministers not set to watch for souls, and to carry the Gospel in every way they can to the destitute?

Are not Christian masters to be blamed? Why have they not seriously undertaken to do something for



their ignorant, degraded servants, who are every day toiling to supply them with the comforts of life?

The guilt lies upon both Ministers and people, and it has been accumulating ever since the introduction of negroes into this country. We who profess to know what is the value of the soul—what is the love and preciousness of the Saviour—we are to take the lead, the world never will. What a multitude of souls have perished through our neglect! What a multitude are actually now perishing, and will perish ere we reach them with the good news of salvation! What a multitude of masters have already met the awful charge at the Bar of God, of having practically despised the eternal interests of the souls of their servants. This charge lies upon masters on every hand, and we tremble lest they may meet it unprepared.

Our whole country groans under the sin of neglect of the salvation of these people. If we continue in this neglect, as God hath now spoken to us, as the true light now shineth, we shall have no cloak for our sin.

We shall manifest a *fearful deficiency in the spirit of the religion which we profess.*

That spirit is one of *love—of obedience.* “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” “*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*” “*Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal.*” “*Preach the Gospel to every creature.*” We are weighed in the balances and found wanting. Do we not see our brother have need, and do we not shut up the bowels of our compassion from him? What avail our numerous works of benevolence? Our Missionaries dwelling in foreign countries, and penetrating to the most destitute settlements of our own? Our Bibles and our Tracts, that all must receive and read? Our Sunday School, and Seamen’s Friend, and Prison Discipline, and Temperance, and numerous other Societies? The very means which we use in contributing to these works, come of the labours of our perishing servants; and no provision is made for them! We are inconsis-

tent. And our Saviour will say to us, "These ye ought to have done, and not have left the other undone." If servants have immortal souls, we must treat them accordingly. To clothe them when they are naked—to feed them when they are hungry—to minister to them when they are sick, does not embrace all our duty. If we do no more, we treat them as the brutes that perish. We must rise higher, and be careful to minister to the necessities of their souls.

On the principles of *self-interest* and *love of country* the duty should be discharged. He who neglects it, loses sight of his own best interests for time and eternity, and of the peace and prosperity of his country. But we take our stand in the discharge of this duty on *Christian principles*—on conscience enlightened by the Word of God, and quickened by the Holy Spirit. Here is the foundation—and if such a foundation exists in the Church of Christ in the slave-holding States, the duty will be felt, and a discharge of it attempted. We believe that such a foundation exists, and we look and appeal with confidence to the Church, to awake to effort in all her members.

The negroes are cast at the door of the Southern Church. They form her great field of Missions, and we cannot allow the claims of any heathen in the world upon us, to be paramount to theirs; and we make the declaration, *that unless we occupy this field, we need not expect the blessing of God to any extent upon our Zion*, for we shall be living in known neglect of duty, and neglect of such duty, as must be exceedingly displeasing to Him.

The time is short: What we do we must do quickly. We shall soon be in our graves, returning to dust side by side with our servants. We shall soon be before the Bar of God, where the artificial distinctions of this world will not be recognized. God is no respecter of persons. Every man shall be judged according to his work. Let us, therefore, in the strength of *our God and Saviour*, renounce our ignorance, and our

indisposition, and extend the privileges of the Gospel to this neglected, dying people, or we shall not meet them in peace in the last day.